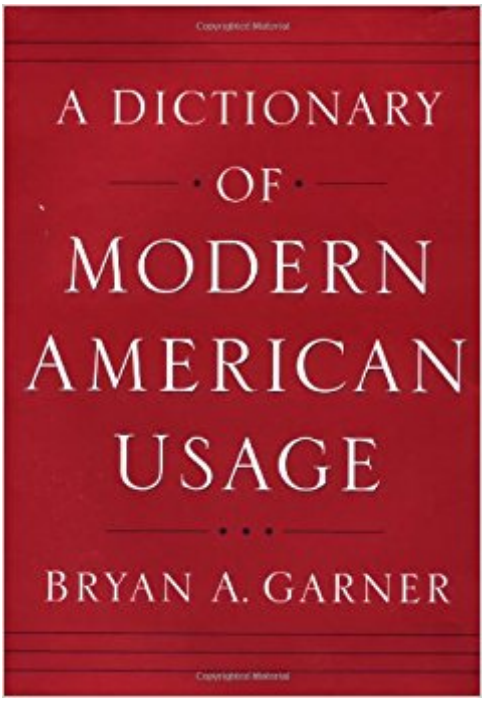
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A Dictionary Of Modern American Usage



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Synopsis

In every age, writers and editors need guidance through the thickets of English usage. Although some language issues are perennial (infer vs. imply), many others spring anew from the well of English: * Is it all right to say alums instead of alumni or alumnae? And should it be spelled alums or alumns? * Should I say empathic or empathetic? Do you home in or hone in? Is it a couple of dozen or a couple dozen? * What's the singular of paparazzi? Is paparazzis an acceptable plural? What about graffiti--singular or plural? And what about kudos? * What's the correct pronunciation of concierge? Or schism? Or flaccid? This book will tell you. In 750 pages of crisp, precise, and often witty pronouncements on modern American English, Bryan Garner authoritatively answers these and thousands of other questions that bedevil those who care about the language. Garner draws on massive evidence to support his judgments, citing more than 5,000 examples--good, bad, and ugly--from sources such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Newsweek. Here is a usage guide that, whether you're a language connoisseur or just a dabbler, you can savor in a leisurely way, a few paragraphs at a time. No one can browse through the book without sharing the author's spirited awareness of how words work and his relish for exposing the affectations that bloat our language. Yet if you don't have the time for browsing, but simply want a quick answer to an editorial riddle, this book is your best bet. DMAU can justifiably lay claim to being the most comprehensive treatment of how American English is used--and abused--as we enter the 21st century.

Book Information

Hardcover: 752 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1St Edition edition (December 3, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195078535

ISBN-13: 978-0195078534

Product Dimensions: 6.8 x 1.7 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #441,890 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #75 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Dictionaries & Thesauruses > Slang & Idioms #306 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Dictionaries & Thesauruses > English #559 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Reference

Customer Reviews

If they had to state a preference, surely all individuals who ever had occasion to write (be it a memo, love letter, quick e-mail, college essay, or novel) would opt for using appropriate, grammatically correct English. The problem isn't in the intent, it's in the availability and accessibility of clear, understandable answers. Most writers (professional and amateur) get by on what sounds right, their memory of compound predicates and serial commas being a little fuzzy. They might turn to a dictionary or even a thesaurus (or, more likely, depend on the convenience of the computer spell-checker and thesaurus functions), but grammar books are rarely cracked outside of high school English classes. But what if there were a book that explained the rules of grammar and usage and that was precise yet easy to understand? A book that was useful, and didn't make you feel like a dunce for not knowing where to put the period when you use quotation marks? A Dictionary of Modern American Usage, written by Bryan Garner and published by Oxford University Press, could be the start of a new movement, a brave new world in which people cheerfully polish their prose, where participles rarely dangle and "less" was not substituted incorrectly for "fewer." Garner, a lawyer and lexicographer, has created a scholarly and readable masterpiece. He clarifies the dos and don'ts of commas and quotation marks, explains why it's not so awful to end sentences with prepositions, and tackles common confusions, such as lay and lie, flaunt and flout, and assure, insure, and ensure. Erudite and dryly witty, spectacularly organized and up to date, and attentive to both basic usage and advanced nuances, A Dictionary of Modern American Usage is destined to become the reference of choice for students, scribes, editors, executives, and language devotees. --Stephanie Gold

"Containing roughly 7000 main entries and many cross references, the dictionry offers intelligent, sensible, readable advice concerning usage demons involving problems of grammar, spelling, homonyms, variants, cliches, skunked words, redundancies, phrasal adjectives and verbs, and more. Garner's long entries on split infinitives and when to us that or which are worth the price of the book. More 5500 illustrative quotations buttress and clarify the author's opinions, and an appended time line listing hundreds of usage guides from 1786 to date is another plus... Garner is a prescriptivist in the common-sense tradition of Fowler. His new dictionary, meant to be an equivalent of Fowler's famous work, deserves a place in every libaray of substance."--Library Journal"A Dictionary of Modern American Usage is a worthwhile supplement for guidance on terms that have troubled editors and writers..."--Copy Editor"The prose in this work is readable, interesting, witty, and lively...it will be very helpful for modern writers who desire to write correctly but

unpretentiously. This resource is highly recommended for public and academic libraries."--Booklist"The next time your syntax needs a sextant, reach for A Dictionary of Modern American Usage.... It contains the most succinct and sensible advice on American usage to come down the pike in a long while.... Unlike most usage guides, this one includes and extensive adn ascellent bibliography. It is also commendably current.... Garner's method is scrupulous and helpful to the reader."--The San Diego Union-Tribune"700 pages of authoritative guidance on hundreds of questions of grammar and usage.... The `brilliancies' in Garner's entries are a joy to peruse."--Herald, Columbia, SC"More consistently entertaining and approachable than the more formal Merriam Webster adn New Fowler's. Garner also treads a little more lightly with the formal terminology of grammar."--The Baltimore Sun"Garner knows his stuff, and he's one of the least-stuffy grammarians around. His Dictionary of Modern American Usage is a superlative book." --Arizona Republic"The prose in this work is readable, interesting, witty, and lively. It will be very helpful for modern writers who desire to write correctly but unpretentiously. This resource is highly recommended." --Booklist"Garner's new dictionary is among the best of its kind. As an American equivalent of Fowler's famous work (compare the titles), it deserves a place in every library of substance." --Library Journal"Excellent. Garner extends the reach of the prescriptive Fowler and the descriptive Merriam-Webster." --William Safire, The New York Times

For three generations, a single book dominated the market as the authoritative reference in matters of grammar, style, and usage in the English language: "A Dictionary of Modern English Usage" by H.W. Fowler, first published in 1926, ably revised by Sir Ernest Gowers in 1965, and now in its third edition (published 1996). But by the century's last quarter, the modern English language -- particularly its American dialect -- had begun outgrowing Fowler, and several newer guides began competing with it. The third (1996) edition of Fowler was a disappointment, and left the field without a clear leading authority.That gap was filled in 1998, when Bryan A. Garner wrote "A Dictionary of Modern American Usage" (published by the Oxford University Press, which also published Fowler). Finally, someone had written a book that matched Fowler -- not only in its erudition, but also in its accessible style, and even its wry sense of humor. And Garner's book had the advantages of being written both in modern times for a modern audience, and in the United States by an American author about American English. The book is a gem, and as authoritative a reference as you will find in this field in the last several decades (and probably the next several too)."DMAU" went into a second edition in 2003, under the title "Garner's Modern American Usage," renamed after its author in view of the acclaim that the first edition earned. A new edition was appearing after only five years

because, as Garner explains in the second edition, "changing usage isn't really the primary basis for a new edition of a usage guide: it's really a question of having had five more years for research." The second edition builds upon the first: the first edition was a dictionary of words in usage, rather than words about usage, and therefore assumed that the reader possessed a certain working knowledge of basic grammatical terms and concepts. For example, the first edition didn't define such basic terms as "sentence," "phrase," "clause," "word," or "part of speech." The second edition appends a glossary that defines many such basic concepts, in addition to many new or expanded entries in the dictionary itself.

Essential!

Product arrived sooner than expected. Great resource. Excellent condition. Came in handy. Great addition to my library.

When I had to give up my office's copy, I bought my own. This is a superb resource for those who wish to use words with care.

one caveat: you must, really must read the preface to make sense of the use of this reference, but once you understand its structure, it's invaluable.

A Dictionary of Modern American Usage is a security blanket for writers. Words and word usages change subtly through the years, so we need authoritative information like this to help us to stay updated and well-informed.

This is an excellent book by the legal writing guru Bryan Garner. Using this book helped me to earn honors in Legal Research and Writing, and I use it every time I write anything, be it a research memorandum or other work product. I cannot more strongly recommend this book, it will be invaluable in any writing endeavor. According to former University of Minnesota Professor Irving Younger "From now on, anyone who tries to write about the law without this book close at hand will be guilty of literary and perhaps of legal misfeasance. In short an invaluable reference." What more do you need to know.

What am I becoming? A usage snob?? Not cool. (Or is it??)Like some other reviewers, I was

inspired to pick up this manual after reading David Foster Wallace's glowing review called Authority and American Usage. Anyone whom DFW calls a genius deserves a careful look. So I gave Garner one, and I'm pretty glad I did.It's not a book I am prepared to recommend to my friends, and I don't have enough context to know how this compares to other usage manuals, but if you are a lay non-grammar-snob like me, my advice would be this: Read DFW's essay first. It will heighten your appreciation by orders of magnitude, giving it a human element that it's otherwise sure to miss. And then pick it up and just give it a browse. Check out the table of contents to see if anything inspires you, flip to some random pages and see what you find. I learned a good amount in the few hours I spent with this book, not just about grammar but about what it means to write well, and why we should care. I was also delighted to find little nuggets of humor throughout--not something I expected from a grammar snob.

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